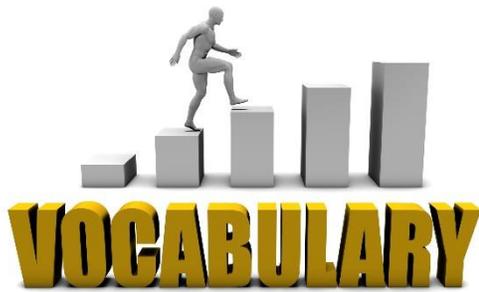


Pre-teaching Vocabulary and Vocabulary Instruction

Many students who are hard of hearing or deaf enter school with limited vocabularies and language



experience, whether their communication modality is spoken or signed. Given these constraints, vocabulary instruction is an essential and ongoing component of our work with students. The sheer breadth and depth of information presented in a general education setting is often overwhelming, however, pre-teaching vocabulary can be an effective strategy in helping students integrate new words and concepts into their “bank of knowledge”.

Various factors come into play when pre-teaching vocabulary is identified as an accommodation and/or specialized instruction. Pre-teaching vocabulary requires close collaboration with classroom teachers. Lesson plans may be difficult to obtain, finding signs for many specialized topics can be a challenge, and time limitations make deciding which vocabulary is the most important to teach is equally challenging.

Teachers of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing must have curriculum expertise for multiple grade levels, including staying abreast of the words and concepts being taught. One resource created by Texas educators is <https://www.lead4ward.com>. Concepts and vocabulary introduced in each grade, along with previous concepts to be mastered are included for all core subject areas from kindergarten to high school. This academic vocabulary can be extremely helpful in planning your pre-instruction.

Free resource provides invaluable information for teachers working with multiple grade levels:
<https://www.lead4ward.com>

Tips for vocabulary instruction:

1. **Scaffolding**- Learning the meaning of a new word may be more effectively taught when students can relate new words to prior knowledge. Effective teachers relate new vocabulary to what a child is likely to already know rather than to a dictionary or glossary definition. For example, when teaching the word ‘severe,’ the student may learn it better when it is related to a personal experience (e.g. a severe injury) than to a story about the weather. For some students with hearing loss, teaching the word *injury* will be required while learning the word *severe*.
2. **Explicit Instruction** – Put away your assumptions about *what you think the student knows* and teach to be sure the student can say/sign the word, recognize it in print and in visual representation, discuss the word’s multiple meanings, and use it in its various contexts.
3. **Discussion** – For deeper understanding, discussion is paramount. The term “discussion” is not to be confused with “questioning.” Discussion, in a group setting, involves questions or comments going from student-to-student with the teacher acting as a facilitator where questioning usually goes from teacher-to-student, back to teacher, and then to another student, with content being more strictly controlled by the teacher. **Discuss:**
 - a. the definition
 - b. multiple meanings
 - c. produce synonyms and antonyms
 - d. practice using the word in reading and writing, and
 - e. provide examples and non-examples of appropriate use of the word.



4. **Visual/graphic organizers**- Visual/graphic organizers show relationships between words and make information easier to manage. Our students need to be able to identify attributes and categorize words in various ways. Some types of visual organizers include Venn diagrams, flow charts, KWL charts, sequential organizers, semantic maps, and graphs. Without word organization, students end up with a “laundry basket” of new words rather than a file cabinet. And isn’t it easier to retrieve something from a file cabinet than a laundry basket?
- The ability to organize words and information makes word retrieval easier.**
5. **Repetition, repetition, repetition** - Repetition is necessary for students to master vocabulary words. Along with repeated exposure, seeing and using a new word or phrase across content areas and activities will help deepen word knowledge. **Up to 12 exposures may be necessary to develop deep understanding of a new word, and students who struggle with reading may need additional opportunities** (Easterbrooks & Beal Alvarez, 2013).

Which vocabulary words?

- Tier 1 words are words students are likely to know (happy, mom)
- Tier 2 words appear in many contexts and across content areas (equal, state)
- Tier 3 words are content-specific (chromosome, biosphere)

While some of our students may have to be taught Tier 1 words before moving on, targeting vocabulary instruction for Tier 2 words may be the best use of your time for students in the general education setting. These are words that will be seen and heard frequently and across subjects. Taking advantage of pre-teaching these words in multiple contexts and forms (with applicable prefixes and suffixes) will address higher order thinking skills as well. There are many sources for Tier 2 word-lists, such as this free resource that appears on Teachers Pay Teachers: <https://www.teacherspayteachers.com/FreeDownload/FREEBIE-Vocabulary-Targets-Word-List-K-5-Tier-2-Words-2095007>

Other sources for vocabulary instruction include ***Cracking the Grammar Code*** 4 Book set with a ***Vocabulary Enhancement Simple Picture Glossary Supplement*** (Homelvig & Rugg); ***Latin and Greek Roots: Teaching Vocabulary Using Hands-On Activities and Common Objects*** (Stokes); ***100% Curriculum Vocabulary***-Primary and Secondary Editions (Eggleston & Larson). See [complete catalog](#).

Pre-teaching vocabulary is NOT tutoring – it is specialized instruction.

Systematic vocabulary instruction including pre-teaching is essential not only for increased knowledge of the world around our students, but also for increased confidence in reading, writing, and comprehension.

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